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MEMORANDUM FOR: Project Security Officer

21 March 1958

SUBJECT : CORONA Clearances

1. Because there was some urgency about the matter, I authorized General Ritland to brief [redacted] on CORONA. I have also agreed that Colonel Evans should be briefed as soon as his clearance is verified by you. General Ritland also mentioned a [redacted] BMD, as probably requiring a clearance at some time in the future. If you do not have the full names of these individuals or have any doubts about this matter, would you either obtain the information or talk to me so I can perhaps supply them.

2. I understand that clearance has been requested for [redacted] [redacted] who was at the Tuesday meeting in Cambridge. I believe this is the most urgent single clearance for that company. Since major complications have arisen concerning the technical aspects of the [redacted] subsystem, and since these can be discussed only with [redacted] there is some urgency about this clearance.

3. I would appreciate receiving from you at your convenience a list of senior cleared people in the various organizations concerned with CORONA together with the numbers of additional clearances requested by each organization.

4. I need hardly emphasize the importance of keeping a full and up-to-date list of personnel cleared for this project. Indeed, it is going to be necessary for you to maintain such a list not only in our office but in BMD, probably somewhere in the Pentagon and possibly in each of the companies concerned, so that cleared individuals will know with whom they can do business. I am convinced that the provision of this information to all the organizations concerned on a completely timely basis will greatly strengthen our security, since if witting individuals are convinced that their lists are accurate and up-to-date there will be less likelihood of the revelation of classified information by misunderstandings.

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5. One more requirement that must be added to the foregoing is for a completely up-to-date list in your office of the names and clearance status of individuals on whom clearance has been requested but to whom it has not yet been granted. I should think such a list might appropriately indicate for each name an approximate date by which any investigation is expected to be completed. I wish to emphasize the desirability of having your office in a position to answer inquiries about the status of individuals without either delay or great trouble for the individual in your office who is looking up the desired information.

6. I am not familiar with the mechanic system you use but may I suggest that one of the standard forms of visible card file, possibly using different colored cards for different clearances would seem to me an effective device for this purpose. After all, although the total number of clearances outstanding for the various projects with which you are concerned runs into the thousands, the maintenance of a card file of this size does not present a major data handling problem. It would take a good many man hours to set the file up (if it does not already exist) but thereafter I should think it should be SOP to type and enter a card as soon as a clearance request had been received. Thereafter penciled notations would keep the file up-to-date and in a form that any of your colleagues or your secretary could readily and without difficulty respond to inquiries.

7. No doubt some such system is already in effect and I apologize for telling you how to do your business. I must confess, however, to have felt on occasion that our lists have not been in good shape (largely for reasons beyond your control) and that the deficiencies therein have given rise to inconvenience and to opportunities for breaches of security. Perhaps you would let me know at your convenience how you propose to manage this particular aspect of your responsibility.

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RICHARD M. BISSELL, JR.  
Project Director

RMB ☐  
1-Addressee  
2-Pro. Dir. FU  
3-CORONA Chrono

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